

Please amend the claims as follows:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended): A quality control method for a spectrophotometer, comprising the steps of:

determining with the spectrophotometer an absorption spectrum $A_m(\lambda)$ of a fluid quality control sample containing a dye selected from such dyes which provide the quality control sample with an absorption spectrum with a significant absorbance peak showing a steep flank,

determining a wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ between the absorption spectrum $A_m(\lambda)$ of the actually measured quality control sample and a reference absorption spectrum $A_0(\lambda)$ of a reference quality control sample containing the dye stored in a memory of the spectrophotometer, and

comparing $\Delta\lambda$ with $\Delta\lambda_{qc}$, wherein $\Delta\lambda_{qc}$ is a wavelength shift assigned to the quality control sample.

2. (Original): A method according to claim 1, wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined from $A_m(\lambda)$ and a predetermined mathematical parameter stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer.

3. (Original): A method according to claim 2, wherein the mathematical parameter is a coefficient vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ and wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined from $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$.

4. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 3, wherein the vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ fulfils the equation

$$\Delta\lambda = C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda).$$

5. (Original): A method according to claim 4, wherein $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ has been determined from a Taylor series of the reference absorption spectrum $A_o(\lambda)$.

6. (Original): A method according to claim 5, wherein $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ has been determined from a combination of the reference absorption spectrum $A_o(\lambda)$ and a first derivative $A_o'(\lambda)$ of said reference absorption spectrum.

7. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined after normalisation of the determined spectrum $A_m(\lambda)$ with an estimate of the concentration of the dye.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the quality control sample has a known dye concentration C_{qc} and the dye comprises a first and a second component, the method further comprising the steps of

calculating parameters s_1 and s_2 from

$$s_1 = C_1(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$$

$$s_2 = C_2(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$$

in which $C_1(\lambda)$ and $C_2(\lambda)$ are predetermined vectors previously stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer, and

calculating an estimated concentration C_{est} of the dye from

$$C_{est} = a s_1 + b s_2$$

in which a and b are predetermined constants previously stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer.

10. (Original): A method according to claim 9, further comprising the step of comparing C_{est} with C_{qc} .

11. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 9, further comprising the step of calculating a variable $Q_{\text{est}} = s_{2\text{est}}/s_{1\text{est}}$.

12. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 11, wherein the quality control sample has an assigned value of $Q_{\text{qc}} = s_{2\text{qc}}/s_{1\text{qc}}$, which method further comprises the step of comparing Q_{est} with Q_{qc} .

13. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the spectrophotometer is an oximeter.

14. (Original): A method according to claim 13, wherein spectra are measured in the wavelength range from 400 to 800 nm.

15. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of determining estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the oximeter caused by the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$.

16. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 9, wherein the spectrophotometer is an oximeter, further comprising the step of determining estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the oximeter caused by a difference between C_{est} and C_{qc} .

17. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 12, wherein the spectrophotometer is an oximeter, further comprising the step of determining estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the oximeter caused by a difference between Q_{est} and Q_{qc} .

18. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

determining a first reference absorption spectrum $A_{01}(\lambda)$ of a reference sample containing a dye in a first concentration with a reference spectrophotometer,

determining a first derivative $A_{01}'(\lambda)$ of the first reference spectrum, and

determining from at least the first reference spectrum $A_{01}(\lambda)$ and the first derivative $A_{01}'(\lambda)$ a mathematical parameter from which a wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ of the spectrophotometer can be determined, and

storing the mathematical parameter in a memory of the spectrophotometer.

19. (Previously presented): A method according to claim 18, wherein the step of determining the mathematical parameter comprises the steps of

calculating a set of calibration vectors $B_i(\lambda)$ according to

$$B_i(\lambda) = s_i A_{01}(\lambda) + s_{i3} A_{01}'(\lambda)$$

in which $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ ($N > 1$) and s_i and s_{i3} are constants of selected values,

determining a coefficient vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ constituting the mathematical parameter so that each set of corresponding values s_{i3} , $B_i(\lambda)$ satisfies:

$$s_{i3} = C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot B_i(\lambda), \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, N.$$

20. (Currently amended): A method according to claim 18, wherein the dye comprises a first component and a second component, and further comprising the step of determining a second reference spectrum $A_{02}(\lambda)$ of a second reference sample containing the dye in a second concentration with the reference spectrophotometer, and wherein the step of determining a mathematical parameter comprises the steps of

calculating a set of vectors $B_i(\lambda)$ from

$$B_i(\lambda) = s_{i1} A_1(\lambda) + s_{i2} A_2(\lambda) + s_{i3} A_0'(\lambda)$$

in which $A_1(\lambda)$ and $A_2(\lambda)$ are derived from the first and second reference spectra $A_{01}(\lambda)$, $A_{02}(\lambda)$ and represent spectral information about the first and second components, respectively, and $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ ($N > 1$), and s_{i1} , s_{i2} and s_{i3} are constants of selected values,

determining a vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ constituting the mathematical parameter so that

$$s_{i3} = C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot B_i(\lambda).$$

21. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer comprising a processor that is adapted to determine the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ between an absorption spectrum $A_m(\lambda)$ determined with the spectrophotometer on a fluid quality control sample containing a dye selected from such dyes which provide the quality control sample with an absorption spectrum with a significant absorbance peak showing a steep flank and a reference absorption spectrum $A_0(\lambda)$ of a reference quality control sample containing the dye, stored in a memory of the spectrophotometer wherein the quality control sample has an assigned wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda_{qc}$, and wherein the processor is adapted to compare $\Delta\lambda$ with $\Delta\lambda_{qc}$.

22. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 21, wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined from $A_m(\lambda)$ and a predetermined mathematical parameter stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer.

23. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 22, wherein the mathematical parameter is a coefficient vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ and wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined from $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$.

24. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 23, wherein the vector $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ fulfils the equation

$$\Delta\lambda = C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda).$$

25. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 24, wherein $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ has been determined from a Taylor series of the reference absorption spectrum $A_0(\lambda)$.

26. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 25, wherein $C_{\Delta\lambda}(\lambda)$ has been determined from a combination of the reference absorption spectrum $A_0(\lambda)$ and a first derivative $A_0'(\lambda)$ of said reference absorption spectrum.

27. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 21, wherein the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ is determined after normalisation of the determined spectrum $A_m(\lambda)$ with an estimate of the concentration of the dye.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 21, wherein the quality control sample has a known dye concentration C_{qc} and the dye comprises a first and a second component, and wherein the processor is adapted to

calculate parameters s_1 and s_2 from

$$s_1 = C_1(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$$

$$s_2 = C_2(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$$

in which $C_1(\lambda)$ and $C_2(\lambda)$ are predetermined vectors previously stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer, and

calculate an estimated concentration C_{est} of the dye from

$$C_{est} = a s_1 + b s_2$$

in which a and b are predetermined constants previously stored in the memory of the spectrophotometer.

30. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 29, wherein the processor is further adapted to compare C_{est} with C_{qc} .

31. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 29, wherein the processor is further adapted to calculate a variable $Q_{est} = s_{2est}/s_{1est}$.

32. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 31, wherein the quality control sample has an assigned value of $Q_{qc} = s_{2qc}/s_{1qc}$ and wherein the processor is further adapted to compare Q_{est} with Q_{qc} .

33. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 21 which is an oximeter.

34. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 33, wherein spectra are measured in the wavelength range from 400 to 800 nm.

35. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 33, wherein the processor is adapted to determine estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the spectrophotometer caused by the wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$.

36. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 29, wherein the spectrophotometer is an oximeter and the processor is further adapted to determine estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the spectrophotometer caused by a difference between C_{est} and C_{qc} .

37. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 32, wherein the spectrophotometer is an oximeter and the processor is further adapted to determine estimated errors in blood parameter values reported by the spectrophotometer caused by a difference between Q_{est} and Q_{qc} .

38. (Previously presented): A spectrophotometer according to claim 21 for the determination of a concentration c_y of a component y of a sample and wherein the memory further comprises

at least one vector $A_{int}(\lambda)$ representing spectral information of an interfering component in the sample at a concentration C_{ref} , and

at least one predetermined vector $K_{int}(\lambda)$ and wherein

the processor is further adapted to

calculate the concentration C_{int} of the interfering component according to

$C_{int} = K_{int}(\lambda) \cdot A_m(\lambda)$, and

if C_{int} is greater than a predetermined threshold value, C_{ref} , calculate a modified absorbance spectrum $A_{mod}(\lambda)$ according to

$$A_{mod}(\lambda) = A_m(\lambda) - \frac{C_{int}}{C_{ref}} A_{int}(\lambda), \text{ and}$$

determine c_y from the modified spectrum $A_{mod}(\lambda)$ according to

$$C_y = K_y(\lambda) \cdot A_{mod}(\lambda)$$

where $K_y(\lambda)$ is a predetermined vector and whereby the effect of interfering components on determined concentrations C_y is minimised.

39. (Original): A spectrophotometer according to claim 38, wherein the interfering component is fetal hemoglobin.

40-43. (Canceled).